proved. Nobody complained more loudly than the ryot about the inapplicability of the system. It gave rise to oppression and malpractices. Therefore, when the settlement was introduced it was decided to work out the taxation system on average production, which duly took into account the fact that the lands were left uncultivated and fallow for a certain number of years. The ryots welcomed it. I am afraid if we revert to the old bad system again, it will give rise to complaints once more. In any case, if any change is to take place, it must await a general revenue settlement.

**105. Needs of the Punja cultivators of Kuttanad.**

MR. KORA THOMAS (*Member, Changanachery taluk, Group II*) said that the *punja* fields of Kuttanad were deteriorating year by year. The efforts of the Department of Agriculture to improve these lands had so far proved unsuccessful. With a view to improve these lands the member had the following suggestions to make :—

(1) Opening of a canal from the confluence of the Pampa and the Manimala rivers at Muttar to the Kidangara canal and from there to the Kumarankari canal. For want of such a channel, most of the silt and mud that came by the two rivers never reached farther than the fields at Muttar and in the neighbouring areas. The fields lower down the rivers could be improved by the opening of the proposed canal. Besides, the canal would furnish a short cut from Muttar to Kumarankari, which could now be reached only by a circuitous journey of six or seven miles. There was yet another advantage that could be gained by opening this canal. It would be a means of irrigating the large extent of paddy fields enclosed between the Changanachery canal, the Kidangara canal, the Chelayar, and the Kumarankari canal. Nor would the opening of the canal be a costly enterprise as its route lay largely through Kandukrishi lands, for which Government had to pay no cost of acquisition.

(2) Opening of the Kuttapuzha canal. This was a measure for which the people of two taluks, Changanachery and Tiruvalla, were clamouring for several years continuously, and its construction would be a blessing to the people of the two taluks.

(3) Opening of the Chalakal canal. This was a project of which Government themselves recognised the necessity and of which the work had already been begun, but which for some reason had been dropped.

(4) Supply of brushwood to punja cultivators for putting up bunds. Most of the lands from which brushwood used to be collected had been converted into rubber estates and the price of brushwood had consequently gone up very high. Government should therefore either supply the necessary brushwood to the cultivators or assign lands to them for growing it. In this connection the member also referred to the Government order prohibiting the removal of earth from Kandukrishi lands. Where bunds had to be put up for cultivating the fields, the removal of earth was absolutely necessary and he urged that it should be allowed.

(5) Appointment of an agricultural expert, and sale of manures. The Agricultural Department should educate the masses in the use of scientific manures. The use of such manures was sure to improve the productivity of the soil and to make annual cultivation possible. Besides this, for Kuttanad alone the member urged that an expert in agriculture should be appointed with a proper complement of subordinate staff. They should devote themselves solely to the improvement of paddy and cocoanut cultivation in Kuttanad ; they could also distribute on credit among the people manures which they could keep in store in their depots.

(6) Amendment of the Agricultural Loans Regulation. The Regulation should be so amended as to facilitate the issue of loans to cultivators who could not afford to furnish very big securities. It would be enough, in the alternative, if Land Mortgage Banks were instituted to help the cultivators.

(7) Abolition of toll on *vallams*. These *vallams* were very necessary in Kuttanad and to tax them was to tax one of the essentials of life. The boats themselves had risen in price considerably of late, and the tolls added to the burden.

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DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Kora Thomas, the question of opening a canal from the confluence of the Pampa river and the Manimala river at Muttar to the Kidangara canal and from there to Kumarankari canal will be referred to the Divisional Officer who will report after making investigations. The matter has not been dropped and it is still under the consideration of Government.

As regards the Kuttapuzha canal, you heard what I had to say about this yesterday.

In regard to the Chalakkal canal, a sum of Rs. 30,000 was sanctioned in 1910 and a sum of Rs. 14,000 has been spent already. It was realised then that the estimate would be increased by a great deal and so the work was suspended. The trouble is that the bed of the canal is rocky and it costs much by way of blasting the rock and removing the blasted materials. That presents a considerable difficulty and in view of that the Chief Engineer is considering the question of a new alignment which might improve matters. He has called for a report from the Divisional Officer.

In regard to brushwood for punja cultivators, I gather you want waste lands to be set apart for growing it. This question has already engaged the attention of the Director of Agriculture. He made an experiment with the cultivation of sun hemp, which is valuable as a fibre. That meant a good deal of waste. He is making experiments with some cheaper form. He is now experimenting with dwanja. You cannot expect waste lands to be set apart for shrub growth. The Director is still investigating the matter. Your request for facilities in regard to the punja cultivation is a general one and if you can point out specifically one or two directions in which tangible help can be afforded, the Government will be pleased to consider them.

I shall refer the question of agricultural loans to the Land Revenue Commissioner and the Director of Agriculture. I am well aware that the exising rules are not working satisfactorily and we have to devise a better method.

In regard to the all important question of *vallakaram*, you know I promised on a former occasion to go into the question. I have called for a report from the Chief Engineer and his officers as to the possibility of changing the present system. The Chief Engineer has, I understand, just reported about the matter and the whole question will be gone into as far as possible and orders issued.

### 106. Needs of the Ambalapuzha taluk.

MR. M. L. JANARDANAN PILLAI (*Member, Ambalapuzha taluk, Group II*) said that the Alleppey-Shertallai canal should be connected on the Alleppey side with the several smaller channels existing on the western and eastern sides. This would enable people to carry their articles by cheaper and easier means of transport to the markets, and the fullest advantage would be derived from the money spent by Government in opening so much of the main canal. At present all these canals formed isolated channels. Another request that the member made was that the Mannanchery police station should be shifted to Kalavur bazaar. Besides, a dispensary should be opened at the place. A bridge should be put up at the Chunkam terminus of the Commercial Canal. The Vazhichery bridge and the Timber Depot bridge should be completed at least before the close of 1104. The site of a park should be sanctioned for the Alleppey town. The palace maidan would make a very good site. The council had already passed a resolution that this maidan should be converted into a park. But they were not able to do so because the land was not under their control and the council had requested the Government to transfer it to them. A road should be constructed from the Mannanchery backwater landing to the Kalavoor market. The headquarters of the Ambalapuzha taluk should be located at Alleppey. Alleppey should also have a Second Class Magistrate's court.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Janardanan Pillai, I shall see that instructions are issued for deepening and wherever necessary widening and generally improving the two existing cross canals east and west of the portion of the Alleppey-Shertallai canal which has been constructed. In fact the question of opening up a channel in the matter of east to west communication is already engaging the attention of the Chief Engineer who is hoping to be in a position to prepare a complete scheme and a programme of systematic work.



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